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STATINTL

One 'No' Man at Least

Senator J. W. Fulbright's warning against committing American armed forces in Laos deserves the closest attention from President Kennedy, not only because of the intrinsic merits of his position, but because, by all accounts, the Arkansas Senator was one of the firmest opponents of the President's Cuba venture.

When an adviser turns out to be right he has earned a more respectful hearing next time. Senator Fulbright reportedly used the full influence of his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in an effort to dissuade President Kennedy from plunging into a sponsorship of a refugee invasion of Cuba. He foresaw correctly the odds against success and, more important, the immense damage to our position in Latin America that would follow. It is most unfortunate that his counsel did not prevail. But he is entitled to the President's thanks for having spoken out as he did. At times the most valuable advice a President can receive is "No."

On the other side, we hope the President is taking a thoughtful look at those of his close advisers who failed to protect him from what is now generally agreed to have been a major blunder. It is natural that President Eisenhower should warn against a "witch hunt" since in this case a holdover from his own Administration was involved. But Mr. Kennedy, while properly accepting full responsibility for his own decisions, also has a duty to protect himself from bad advice in the future. On the record, CIA Director Allen Dulles and State Department Consultant Adolph A. Berle gave him bad advice, and he should not forget it.

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